

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims of the above-identified application as set forth below in marked-up form. In accordance with the revised amendment format, a clean copy of the claims has been omitted.

Claims 1 to 20. (Cancelled)

21. (Currently Amended) An aluminum nitride/aluminum base composite material, which comprises:

(a) a base material obtained by preparing a preform having pores, obtained by sintering aluminum nitride powder, enclosing the preform in a container provided in a molten metal pressure apparatus, pouring a molten aluminum base material into the container, and, applying pressure to the molten aluminum base material in the container to fill the aluminum base material in the pores of the perform,—;

(b) a covering layer consisting of a ceramic material and covering the—a surface of the base material; and

(c) an intermediate underlayer, disposed between said base material and said covering layer, comprising about 5% nickel.

22. (Currently Amended) The aluminum nitride/aluminum base composite material according to claim 21, wherein ~~in~~ ~~which~~ the molten aluminum base material ~~being together with silicon~~ is poured into the container, together with silicon lumps.

23. (Cancelled)

24. (Currently Amended) The aluminum nitride/aluminum base composite material according to claim 21, wherein ~~in~~ which the ceramic material constituting the covering layer is Al_2O_3 or aluminum nitride.